

120.

A
FUNERAL SERMON,

PREACHED AT

SAINT GEORGE'S CHURCH,

GOODMAN'S-FIELDS,

UPON THE DEATH OF

HENRY BECKMAN, ESQ.

On Sunday, November 24. 1765.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

SOME ACCOUNT OF THAT GENTLEMAN,
IN HIS LAST HOURS.

BY CHRISTOPHER ERNESTUS SCHWAB.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN.

L O N D O N,
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T O

MRS. SUSANNA BECKMAN,
OF NEW-BUILDINGS, BROAD STREET.

M A D A M,

IT is not from the merit of the following Pages, that I do myself the honour of addressing them to you : My chief motive was the friendship that subsisted between myself and your late husband, whose memory must be ever dear to you, and whose loss you have so unfeignedly lamented. Though Dedications be in general complimentary; yet I will not offend you, by saying all that is due to your conjugal fidelity, and your many other virtues. I trust you will find much consolation in the perusal of what I presume God has blessed for your service, to whose especial providence I recommend you.

I am, with the utmost esteem,

M A D A M,

Your most obedient humble servant,

C. E. SCHWAB.

MISS SUSANNA BROWN

OF NEW BRIDGES IN WILTSHIRE

M.A.D.A.M.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 12th inst. in relation to the purchase of the book of the same title as above mentioned. I have the pleasure to inform you that the same has been ordered and will be forwarded to you as soon as it is received.



I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
J. B. BROWN

2

T H E P R A Y E R.

BLESSED be God our Father, and Jesus Christ our Saviour, who moved by love towards us, left the throne of Majesty in Heaven for a season, and came to us on earth to execute the most important work of Redemption; who, after having fulfilled the intent of his mission, ascended into Heaven, where he prays and makes intercession for us, as our High Priest; who likewise, if we obey his voice, and receive him in our consciences, delights to be with us still, and to begin the good work of Grace through his spirit.—But chiefly at this time, praised be the Name of the Lord God of Hosts, in that he has graciously spared us, who have been wicked, ungrateful, and at sundry times rebellious, and that he has preserved our lives to this day, not for any works of righteousness that we have done, but for his mercy's sake, which manifested the grace of God, the fountain of Salvation to all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope in the glorious appearing of the Great God, and Jesus Christ our Lord.—In such measure to Thee, O most merciful God, do we make our appeal.—For thou art He, *that took us out of the womb; thou wert our hope, when we binged yet upon our mother's breasts.* Thou art God, whose years are throughout all generations. *Thou laidst the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands. They shall perish, but Thou endurest for ever and ever.*—Thou weakenest

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our strength in the way of our pilgrimage, and *shortenest our days* according to the counsel of thine infinite fore-knowledge. To what end is it, should the days of our trial amount to threescore and ten years? Nay more, should we attain fourscore, or even surpass them? Seeing at last, though we have survived to the utmost extent of temporal duration, we must be reduced to exclaim, that it has all been labour and sorrow. —Nevertheless, O most merciful and gracious God, do not hurry us thy servants away as with a flood, neither let us *be as asleep*; —let us not be cut off, before we have borne good fruits through thy grace, and are ripe for the *reapers*, which are thy holy angels. —We appear now before thy face, O Lord God, in the name of Jesus Christ thy son, through whose righteousness we have peace with Thee, and humbly and gratefully confess, that all the good we have enjoyed has not been fortuitous, but providential; not by our own hands, but done, O Lord, from thine. —O God, whose mercy endures for ever and ever, be now present with us, and bestow thy benediction on our endeavours; for what are our works, or what are we, without Thine assistance and inspiration? —Thou, Lord Jesus, hast promised to be with us always, *even to the end of the world*. We lay hold on this thy promise. —*We will not let thee go, except thou bledest us.* Amen.



I WILL

I WILL praise thee, O Lord, with my whole heart: I will shew forth all thy marvellous works. This, my dearly beloved, is the noble hymn of gratitude, full of consolation to every believer, even the hymn that the Royal Prophet David, Psal. ix. ver. 1. sung to the glory of God, which is eternal, good, merciful, and gracious, and who (as his precious word assures us) will approve himself such to every one, making due and bounden application to him, since he is the chief and permanent Good to all who loyally adhere to his Divine Majesty, that Majestic Power, which alone does wonders in heaven and earth, and by which he transcends as Great Creator, Dear Father, and Omniscient Governor over all men; whose miraculous deeds, both now and ever, are so consummate in their purity and perfection, that Seraphim singing to the laud of his Glory, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth: "Heaven and earth are full of the Majesty of Thy Glory," are constrained to cover their faces and their feet.—The motive of David's thanksgiving, in the above-cited hymn, was his state of tranquillity at that particular time. Not long before he saw himself surrounded by a multitude of enemies, that persecuted him, and (had it been in their power) would have totally undone him.—But now he finds himself in a situation of entire safety; for his enemies are no more, *they are driven back, fallen, and have perished*. This (as he well confesses) could not be effected by him, for he was perfectly convinced of his own weakness in respect to the vast number of his adversaries, neither could it be the work of human allies or prosperous fortune, seeing God is certainly not only the Maker of all creatures, but the Disposer of all events. In which character he ascribes the honour of the victory not his own courage or conduct, but to the Lord. Thou (says he) ver. 3. *hast driven them back. They are fallen, and have perished at thy presence*. Now, as the deliverance from an enemy, by the timely aid of another, is a great benefit before God in every man's conscience; so every one that has received such a blessing, is under a most religious obligation to be grateful. The gratitude of the Prophet here consists but of a few

words; for he only says, *I praise Thee*. However, the Lord is pleased with it, because he loves the sincerity of the heart. In the mean time, it is far otherwise with the thankfulness of hypocrites. These also thank God; but their gratitude is wholly external; expressed by words and gestures, that by others they may be looked upon as the true worshippers. They industriously endeavour to attain the habit and manner of those that are heartily thankful; but they are detected by God, unto whose eyes *all things are naked and open*, Heb. iv. 13. and are dismissed with an heavy denunciation, according to the sentence of our Blessed Redeemer, Matt. vii. 23.—Moreover, our Prophet does not hold it sufficient merely to give thanks to the Lord; that is, to acknowledge that, by delivering him from his enemies, God had done him great and singular benefit; but he adds still farther,—*I will shew forth all thy marvellous works*. The consequence deducible therefrom is, that the believer's duty consists not only in the recognition of mercies received from God, and his miracles either seen or upon record, but likewise in an officious diligence to propagate and extol them amongst others. This is evident from God's command, which he gave his people Israel to remember the deeds done before their eyes: *only take heed to thyself* (says he, Deut. iv. ver. 9.) *and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life; but teach them thy sons, and thy sons sons*.

Thus he who will do things pleasing to the Lord his God, must reflect with himself upon the unutterable blessings God has already conferred upon him by the sending of his Son, and the mercy that he daily shews him by preserving him in patience and long-suffering.—Hence let him humbly say, with David, “*I praise thee, O Lord, with my whole heart*.” Alas! it is but too common amongst them who call themselves Christians (would to God they were not too manifest a majority!) to ascribe all the benefits they receive to themselves or to fortune, and by that means deprive God of the honour justly due to him, and his most meritorious name of laud and praise. Yet Zion has still her citizens, though their number be but inconsiderable, that not only praise the Lord their God in good days, but even thank Him and bless Him in crosses and afflictions, and can sing praises to His holy name in the agonies of death itself.—But what sensations of sorrow have I now to undergo, as I cast my eyes about this congregation, and discover so many melancholy objects! How much it goes to my heart to see the tears of a most disconsolate widow flowing afresh, as she painfully acquits

acquits her duty in the most faithful manner toward her late husband, in what respects his ~~ghostly~~ as well as his bodily concern! How severely am I affected at the hard and repeated trials of a tender father, weeping for the loss of a second Ion! How grievous the task to mention such calamities, since I must necessarily make wounds to bleed anew, which are scarcely healed in any degree! How must I sympathize with the deep affliction of a mother, that but fifteen months since had the joy to behold and care for two dear sons, both now covered in the dreary grave, wherefore, alas! now overcome with grief, she may say, with Naomi, "*Call me not Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me,*" Ruth i. 20. In a word, who is there that retains any feeling of humanity, but must be moved at such a sight as this; at the great number of kinsfolk of both sexes, whose habit indicates their sorrow for the loss of a friend, who in this life was so near and dear to them: If such a spectacle from circumstances already considered be affecting, what an addition must it be to my particular grief, that I have lost an intimate friend, who himself chose the text which is now before me, and upon which I was desired to preach. When I meditate on his last words, relating to his assurance of the Divine Mercy, which he uttered before his end to me, saying, NOW I AM HAPPY—I HAVE PEACE WITH GOD.—And again,—HOW HAPPY, O FRIEND, SHALL WE BOTH BE THEN, WHEN WE SHALL SING BEFORE THE THRONE OF GOD AN ETERNAL HALLELUJAH TO THE LAMB, WHICH HAS BEEN KILLED FOR OUR SINS SAKE! When I meditate (I say) upon striking circumstances like these, I am persuaded my dearly beloved brethren will readily indulge me with their approbation for every assertion I can urge in his favour.—I know that to-day you expect no learned expositions; but what you look for is to be fortified in your faith, which, by the Grace of God, shall be sufficiently done in deductions from my text.—But, before we proceed, we will through Christ apply to God, rich in goodness and mercy, and will beseech him, yea confidently beseech Him, as pious children their dear father, that we may have grace to be partakers of the treasures which are in Jesus, who has taught and commanded us thus to pray.—

Our Father, &c.

ISAIAH xii. I—6.

1. And in that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me.

2. Behold, God is my salvation: I will trust, and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song, he also is become my salvation.

3. Therefore with joy shall you draw water out of the wells of salvation.

4. And in that day shall ye say, praise the Lord, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted.

5. Sing unto the Lord; for he hath done excellent things: this is known in all the earth.

6. Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the holy one of Israel in the midst of thee.

IN DISCOURSING UPON THESE WORDS, I SHALL CHIEFLY CONSIDER THESE TWO PARTICULARS; FIRST, THE NATURE OF THE BENEFITS WHICH WE RECEIVE FROM GOD; AND, SECONDLY, THE HYMN OF PRAISE WHICH SHOULD BE THE CONSEQUENCE THEREOF.

DEARLY Beloved! whatever we have a necessity for in this world, God's good creatures answer, we have God for our Creator; and all things, O man, are created for thy benefit or use. There is nothing good and meritorious in and about us, which could impel and move God to deal thus with us; we rightly conclude that God has set us in this world, to manifest towards us the riches of his love, mercy, and grace.

Whatever good, either ghostly or bodily, happens to us, is a benefit. The benefits which God shews us, in respect to our natural life, are either general or particular. That God gives and preserves this natural life; that he prepares man's bones in the womb, and him out of it; that he gives us whatever is necessary for this life's preservation, belongs to the kind of benefits, which are called general. But if God brings one man to great honours on earth, and gives another an especial blessing in trade; if he favours *this person* with a rare strength of body, and

and a continual health, and bestows upon *that* a good genius or natural parts; if he presents a third with a good memory, and graces a fourth with understanding, judgment and wisdom, we are used to call these gifts particular benefits.

How great and shining all the gifts are, now mentioned, how much vain men boast of their quality, riches, or acquired sciences, wherewith they think to outdo others; they are highly miserable, if alone they aim at the perishable things of this world, nay aim at them so indoltriously and covetously, that they hinder God's Spirit in His workings, who but He alone can give the gifts which make quite perfect, which Christ the promised seed, the antitype of the slain passover lamb, and the serpent lifted up by Moses, has acquired through his death on the cross. John iii. 14, 15. Numb. xxv. 8, 9. Ps. lxviii. 19. Eph. iv. 8, 9, 10.

We therefore can contribute nothing, but rather hinder the acquiring of those gifts, which adapt us to that perfect and most happy life, for which God has created us. God, who never has been tired in doing bountifully to us, His creatures; God, who has loved us always as a tender father his children, has contrived means by which we may attain it. We see that in the example of the Jews, in our text, ver. 4. who by the universal call to the communion of Christ's kingdom and partaking of his redemption, are finally to be called and gathered out of all parts of the earth.

The consequence of what we now have mentioned is: *God, who has proposed Jesus for the salvation of the whole world, calls every one to partake of him as an infallible Saviour to such as persevere in faith on him.* The grace of the Lord, according to God's purpose, is to be made known to every one, and in such wise the salvation of the Lord Messias is to be offered. This indeed has been done already before Christ's coming on earth, as well preceding as after the deluge. If now the will of God with respect to that dispensation is not become known to every one, the fault is in no degree to be imputed to God, but alone to mens carelessness on the one hand, and obstinacy on the other.

The command of the Lord Jesus in the terms of the new covenant is, in regard to calling, universal; no people, or generation, no quality, nay, no man is excepted out of it. Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. Luke xxiv. 17. 1 Tim. ii. 4. 2 Pet. ii. 9. Yet God doth not let it suffice, that He calls us by his word, but still through his Spirit He gives us inward conviction. The same spirit strove of old with the first world. Gen. vi. 3.

and does so still, according to Christ's promise, even to this day. John xvi. 8.

Woe to him, who despises the first gifts of the Spirit, for such a one always is stubborn, and with whom the working of grace bears nothing but cursed thorns and thistles of sin! Woe to him, who prefers Satan's and the world's friendship to God's benevolence; and doth not prepare himself for a higher grace; for the consequence is, at last he is forsaken by God's Spirit, and persists in the hardness of his heart. God commiserating all men, calls every such sinner that so obstinately is the cause of his eternal ruin, with a heart kindled with love: *O Israel, thou destroyest thyself; but in me is thy help.* Hos. xiii. 9. If thou would'st consider, O man, who hearest God call thus, what is useful to thy temporal and eternal peace; surely thou would'st give up the service of him, who so many years together has carried thee about as a fettered slave, and sold to all sins and vices; thou couldest love no longer him, who from the beginning had amerced thee, and out of spite and envy, deprived of God's love, the most amiable of all beings; thou wouldest hate sin, inticing and noxious sin, *which separates thee and thy God*; Isa. lix. 2. nay thou wouldest hate it with thy whole heart, with the resolution to commit it no more. He, who will become a partaker, to get God on his side through Christ, and for Christ's sake, leave off sin, does works meet for repentance, and believes on the gospel. Penitence and faith are the two points, by which we have access. Our Saviour Jesus Christ inculcates them, upon that account, very earnestly in his first sermon, Mark i. 15. Saying, *Repent ye, and believe the gospel.* These are the points, O man, which thou can'st not accomplish by thine own power, for thou art by nature dead in sins. Eph. ii. 1, 5. Well then weigh a little, what can a dead man do? Is he capable of motion or activity? Thou knowest that cannot be. No more can thy penitence be real penitence, if it be not wrought by God. Faith thou canst not impart to thyself; it is God's gift. Eph. ii. 8. Repentance, as has been now proved, thou canst not attain either with thine own nor another's strength. Then what is left within the compass of thy weakness to do? Nothing else, but to cast thee down humble with all thy supposed good works and merits, which without Christ Jesus are thy sins, and to pray with Ephraim: Jer. xxxi. 18. *Turn thou me, Lord, and I shall be turned.* If God works repentance in thee, he shews thee through his law, as in a mirror, all thy sins, their ugly form, and dreadful desert, and awakens and terrifies thy careless heart by the thunder of His voice in thy conscience; nay pierces it like a two-edged sword, piercing even to
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the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, inſomuch, that thou confeſſeſt all thy fear before him, the judge of all fleſh, art aſhamed of having ſo baſely forgot thy ſole benefactor, and ſo criminally offended, and paſſeſt ſentence on thyſelf with the thoughts and intents of thy heart; thy heart, which is now thy judge to condemn thee. Heb. iv. 12. But God leaves not a ſinner, whoſe heart is thus broken and contrite, in ſo deſperate a condition, but brings forth in him, through the word of His Goſpel, faith in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and by it ſhews him, that for his ſake Jeſus had alſo been ſent forth *to be a propitiation for his ſins*. Rom. iii. 25. and upon that account his bones broken by Moſes's law, may rejoice anew. Is not this, O ſinner, an inſtimable benefit that the Lord deals thus with thee? Is not that ſhewing mercy inſtead of juſtice? Muſt not thou, when reflecting on ſuch love, cry out in a tranſport: O! the depth of the riches both of the wiſdom and goodneſs of God! Rom. xi. 33. But the Divine Benefactor ſtops not here,

But he ſends croſſes to his children to fortify them in faith, merely for to manifeſt his love to them in the end; for faith St. Paul, Gal. iii. 26. *Ye all are the children of God by the faith of Jeſus Chriſt*. The believers aggrrieved at firſt, look upon them many times as marks of the divine wrath, whereas the iſſue proves always, they were the reſult of love. We ſee, that from the believers in our text, x. 1. who the Prophet introduces, acknowledging that when they looked upon their late ſtate, namely, their captivity, as a mere working of divine wrath, they were in the wrong, as their hymn of praiſe ſufficiently proves. A believer under affliction, muſt think upon no account that God deals hardly with him, or be angry with Him. God alone knows what is beſt for thee. If ſuch thoughts of God enter thy head, remember Job, whom God himſelf gave this praiſe, he was a perfect and an upright man, one that feared God and eſchewed evil. Haſt thou had a like meaſure of affliction? Four terrible meſſengers, following ſuddenly one upon another, came to him. The firſt of them related, that the Sabeans living upon robbing and plunder, had taken away his oxen and aſſes; the ſecond, the Chaldeans had made an invasion, and carried away all his camels; the third, the fire was fallen from heaven, and had burnt up the ſheep and the ſervants; the fourth, that there had ruſhed a great wind from the wilderneſs and had ſmitten the four corners of the houſe of his eldeſt ſon, and it fell upon the young men, and they were dead. If only one ſuch ſad accident has befallen thee, haſt thou behaved ſo patiently, humbly kiſſed God's rod and ſpoke: *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, bleſſed be the name of the Lord*. Job i. xxi. And behold thou

who wilt be Jesus's disciple, and hath got no other badge of thy Saviour's service, thou wilt complain of the hardness of thy cross, thou wilt become impatient of it. Pray, ponder, if thou shouldst suffer still a greater evil than what thou sufferest, that thou hast deserved it all. What grief and sorrow hast thou occasioned God through thy sins, that also he did not spare his only son, but delivered him up, nay delivered him up to the ignominious and painful death of the cross, for to make satisfaction for the sins of the whole world, and thus for thine also. 1 John ii. 2. Darest thou yet say, that your cross is hard? Observe then, if God visit thee with a cross, bear it patiently, and do not repine at it, for this is an abomination unto the Lord. But the tears and the sorrows, as the ordinary consequences of chastisements, are, if they be sincere, not unacceptable to God. This is confirmed when our Saviour announces to his disciples their imminent sufferings, *ye shall be sorrowful, ye shall weep and lament*, John xvi. 20. St. Paul follows this Divine Redeemer, and expresses himself on that behalf thus: *Now no chastening for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous*. Heb. xii. 11. Thus the practice of those is sufficiently refuted, that pretend to be in a state of repentance, and yet can be indifferent in it. Those, that so lightly do judge of it, must never have had a true feeling of the misery of their sins. For could that be supposed, how would they be so daring, to contradict Jesus, the mouth of truth, in all the agonies of his passion? Therefore, Jesus's sentence stands confirmed, the experience of those stands, that love Jesus, their Master, that his followers never remain without trials. They must often, lamenting, ask, as if they were called upon by the Prophet. Isa. xxi. 11. *Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, the morning cometh, and also the night*. Oh! Keeper and Watchman of Israel! Is that night soon over, the night that lasteth us so long because of our pressing affliction? Do our complaints and griefs soon end? O God! the sun of joy rises anew to others, but over us a dark night still impends, a night, that we have to spend in tears, weeping, griefs and complaining. Is this the lot of God's children? O! how hard is it then to be a child of God. Thus many of the Jews in captivity, may have thought in the beginning, as we may conclude from our text, when they, God's own people, the priests of all nations, were ordained to be the slaves of another people; but, as we shall hear afterwards, they thought at the end otherwise, for it was profitable for them. And thus is affliction to every believer, by it he is reminded not only of his actual sins, but it raises in him compunction for them: he confesses his fault, pays God the honour

honour due to him in respect to his justice; and says, as did Joseph's brethren, Gen. xlii. 19. I am verily guilty concerning this or that sin; nay, I had deserved a greater punishment than this, if God had not shewn me mercy instead of executing justice.

Is not this a benefit to the sinner? Where is now the hardness of the cross? What can those answer to it, to whom the cross seems to be so very hard? Silence will be the best answer, and submission to the Divine Providence, the wisest behaviour. God wrongs no body; and how can he do so to his children? Every one of them must rather own, that through the calamities which they have undergone, they have been withheld from sins and vices, stirred up to true godliness, and fortified in faith and patience. In this manner, God fulfils what He has spoken in the prophecy of Hos. ii. 6. 7. *I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall, that she shall not find her paths. And she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find them: then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband; for then was it better with men than now.* Blessed is he, who having gone off from the Lord, is driven by the cross to him. This is the right trial of faith. Whosoever shall endure this, his faith is right, and more precious than the gold, that perisheth, though it be tried with fire. Abraham's faith in the Lord his God was in the beginning great; and Job's piety unexceptionable, as God himself witnesseth; but then they became very shining, when they held out in the trials, that God, according to his will inflicted upon them, and *fought out the good fight of faith and patience.* And this is the case of all the children of God, who follow Abraham in faith and Job in patience. At the same time, when they think God at the greatest distance from them, they find, that he is quite near to them; and this shews,

That he never suffers believers to want consolation, when distress is the most urgent. The greatest distress of a believer, if he be tried, is sin; which is the wrong he has done to God. Nothing grieves him so much, as that whatever wrong he has done concerns him nearly; but he cannot pardon his behaving so perversely towards God; and, what is worse, he can find no where rest, nor meet with any comfort. None of his friends being able to take off his heavy burden, he prays to God sincerely and begs earnestly.

God, who is all love, mercy, and gentleness, cannot possibly bear to let such a distressed soul call and suffer long; nay, before she calls,

He hears her; for his fatherly heart is touched. He therefore gives her power (for the power of God, in such weak souls, is peculiarly strong) to apply to herself the promises of grace, which He has given to the weary and heavy laden. In the strength of the Lord (like Gideon against the Midianites, Judg. vi. 14, 16.) she goes a hungering after grace, and thirsting for righteousness, to the fountain of salvation, to draw water for the refreshing of her soul. This is indeed a great comfort for such a soul already, that she that before could not go or stand, now can walk: but in her walking, she still has a great trouble upon her, of which she wishes to be freed. To walk, she says, I have strength; but this is not sufficient to draw water. But by this she doth not suffer herself to be discouraged from proceeding, though she finds it a hard task. She goes and comes to the well, which the Lord has shewed her. Her distress, which she had before, is now over; seeing somebody standing there, who calls and invites: *Whoever thirsteth, let him come to me and drink*; John vii. 37. She comes and drinks. As soon as she hath drank she finds in herself a particular strength and cheerfulness. Like a traveller, who, in a summer season, from a long journey being faint and tired, is refreshed and strengthened by a draught of water; so is the soul now refreshed, by the water which Jesus has given her. All fears of death and hell, which had seized her before, are over; since Jesus bid her be of good cheer, like the woman who had the bloody issue for twelve years, to whom He said, *Thy faith hath made thee whole*. Before, she could no more lift up her eyes towards heaven than the publican; but now, her sins through Jesus being forgiven, she hears the voice of the Almighty, the Lord of Hosts, cry to her from heaven, *Fear not, I am with thee*, &c. Isa. xli. 10. From this it is plain, that there is a great difference between him who puts his trust in men, and the vain things of this world; and him who, in all things, confides in the loving kindness of the Lord. He who sows in the flesh, can in the time of trouble, when the hour of temptation is near, expect nothing but carnal help and comfort, and reap at the end utter destruction; when he, who sows in the Spirit, has this consolation, that God calls to him, *Fear not, I am with thee*. Great as the danger may be, she shall lack no good thing, and after this present she reaps eternal life. Gal. vi. 8.

Now, my friends, if these things are really great benefits, as I have proved; if they are indispensably necessary for all who desire eternal happiness, it is highly requisite that every one should strive to obtain

them; and if he is in a state of grace, to observe his duty, which is to be thankful. Therefore we proceed now to the

Second particular, and consider THE BELIEVER'S HYMN OF PRAISE.

He, who will sing a hymn of praise to the glory of God, his great benefactor, must adore, praise, and magnify His majesty, wisdom, loving kindness, justice, holiness, together with his great works and deeds. But if this shall duly be done, we must be acquainted with the attributes and glorious works of the Lord. But these we cannot learn except from His word, nor understand until the Spirit of God opens our hearts, like the heart of Lydia, that we should attend to the Holy Word.

Now those whose hearts are thus opened, are called believers; and are the only fit and able persons to sing a hymn of praise, which is pleasing to the Lord. He, therefore, who desires to sing such a hymn of praise, must do it

From the bottom of his heart, as is evident from ver. 1. And in that day, thou shalt say, *O Lord, I will praise thee, though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me.* The persons who sing this hymn, are those that are converted from Judaism, to the communion of Christ. It was such a hymn as pleased God. In it they confess, that they are nothing, and that God is all. To him alone they ascribe all help and salvation. They praise him for mercies received, and gratefully shew their filial disposition, by submitting in every thing to his will. A plain proof this, that it is the greatest mercy a man can receive, if by the grace of God, he is come to such a point of perfection, as not only to confess Christ with his mouth, but to believe in him with his heart. No praise, no thanksgiving, and no prayer can be acceptable to God, if it does not flow from faith in his son. This we see in the believing Jews. As long as the general invitation to the receiving of the Salvation of the Messiah was not given them, as long as they had been exposed to great calamities, they only looked on their condition as a state of wrath; but the invitation of the new covenant being given them, as our Prophet observed before, and received by them, their sad condition was turned into a state of grace. The application which the believer makes in our text, and in which the Prophet includes all other believers, proves this saying, ver. 2: *Behold God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid, for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song, he also is become my salvation.* From hence we conclude, that man must be very unhappy as long as he lives in a state of nature, for he resists God alway. Before he is brought to the Lord God, he thinks
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of nothing less than of praising Him for his mercies. The sole aim on which he founds all his hopes and joys, is to acquire riches, authority, honour, and friends. No obstacles, no inconveniences of this life, are sufficient to deter him from his design. So miserably blind is that man who builds his hopes upon the perishable things of this world : but he will not believe it, since he imagines he cannot be happy without them, and proposes to himself to praise God in quietness, when he has got plenty of provision for himself. This design would be very good, if it was founded on the will and commandment of God ; but since the Scriptures, in which alone we have the will of God set down, prescribe nothing like it, it is of no validity at all. Nay, if you attend to incidents of this world, it is plainly to be observed that, in general, most people never bring this intention into execution ; for worldly things have not power to awaken them to gratitude. But, what do I say ? they really thank God. But how ? just like the Pharisee. Outwardly they appear as decent as the true children of God, and say with their lips, we thank thee, O Lord. They give charity too ; but not with a design to shew that mercy and love towards their neighbour, which God has shewed to them, but to get glory. Can this be called gratitude ? Is this a proper management of those things we possess only for a short time ? Is this calling God his strength ? Every one that acts so shamefully towards his God, is set down by him on the same list as Pharaoh's chief butler, Gen. xl. 23. on account of his behaviour towards Joseph. What a foolish part, O man, doth thou act in this ; for as gratitude is the greatest of virtues, so ingratitude is the most enormous of vices ; for by that the mercy and love of God are lost, and the hope of such a man, as the wise man in the book of Wisdom, xvi. 2. 9. observes, will be like the white frost in winter, &c.

Now, Ingratitude being such a heinous sin, and a believer of nothing more fearful than of committing any one sin, knowing what sin hath cost God and him, he will by no means shew himself ungrateful. To the immortal honour of king Ahasuerus it is written, Esth. vi. that he ordered Chronicles to be kept, and the names of those to be set down, who had well deserved about his empire, that they might not only be rewarded, as in the case of Mordecai ; but even that their names should be preserved from oblivion. Thus a child of God acts who has found Christ to be his salvation ; with joy he always thinks of the great love of his God towards all his Creatures : but he is all in rapture, when he thinks on the time in which
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it begun to keep a memorial of the mercies which he has received from God. When he remembers the day and the hour, when he was enabled the first time to say, with the Believer in our Text, from the bottom of his heart, *I praise thee, O Lord, because Thou art my salvation*: But it is not sufficient for a believer to say, Thou art my salvation; but he must look back with indignation on his former conversation, and pray God to give him power and strength to say, Thou art my song. Jesus, as the prophet Isaiah lxxii. 11. affirms, is the salvation; and St. Peter, before the whole Sanhedrim, insisted upon it. Acts iv. 12. *That there is no salvation, and no other name under heaven given to men, except the name of Jesus*. And, alas! how few are there who mind this salvation as they ought. How careless and neglectful, are even believers sometimes, to praise this the God of their salvation? He who will duly praise him, must approach him and pray with holy David, Psal. li. 15. *O Lord, open Thou my lips, and my mouth shall shew forth Thy praise*; and this is not to be done once,

But the whole time of our life: not only in the days of prosperity, but in times of adversity. The reason of the believer's doing so, is the Lord's will and commandment, which to transgress is to sin. Can a believer do this? David, knowing God's heart, reveals to us his will, Psal. l. 14. *Offer unto God thanksgiving*: and St. Paul writes to the Thessalonians, 1 Ep. v. 18. *In every thing give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you*. Now, since thanksgiving, as the Royal Psalmist says, lxxix. 3. *pleases God better than an ox or bullock that has horns and hoofs*, it is evident that a believer is obliged to thank the Lord; and he who thanks him also praises him.

Every thing in God is worthy of praise and glory; if we consider His majesty and greatness, we find that *He is a great God, and a king over all the gods*; and that every thing that has life and breath must bow before Him: nay, that even angels and archangels are willing and ready to execute His commands. Do we look up to heaven, and to the firmament? David says of the first, *they declare the glory of God*; and of the last, *they show his handy work*. A believer, seeing and hearing this, should not be wanting in glorifying the majesty and greatness of the Lord of Hosts; and, to do it more effectually, he searches for it according to the measure of knowledge and grace which he has, and if he has lost himself, as it were, in the infinite greatness of God, he cries out with wondering David, Psal. cxlv. 3. *Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable*. As it is in respect to the majesty of God, so it is with regard to all his attributes and works,

works, amongst which there is none that sets a believer more a wonderer than His love with which He has loved him for Jesus sake, and by which he has graciously freed him from eternal death, which, by his sins, he justly deserved. Free from this shocking danger, and remembering the assistance of God, he sings to Him, according to our text, that hymn of praise and thanksgiving which Moses and the thousands of Israel sung to their God after their deliverance, saying, Thou art my strength and my song, and my salvation, therefore I am safe and fear not. How happy is a man who is united to God, and has taken Him for his part! and how unhappy is he that thinks lightly of Him! Is it not a shameful thing for a man to receive all power and strength from God, and yet forget Him as the wicked does? On the contrary, a believer, knowing that he has no power and strength without God, he begs and prays for His assistance to enable him to make Him his song; also nothing can move him from his resolution. No temptation of the world can detain him from his duty: daily to praise and give thanks to his God; and what is more, he is not cast down neither in calamities or death itself, knowing he is not alone, but God is with him. Sure of this gracious presence of God, he undauntedly faces all vexations of this life. God (he says) who is as good as his word, is my God, and how can he forsake me his child. He will deliver me from death, and glorify me: I will praise him even in death. The very same God, who enabled his faithful servants Paul and Silas, when, for the sake of his name, they were scourged and lay fettered in prison, to praise Him, is still existing. He that strengthened the three young men in the fiery furnace joyfully to praise Him, is the God of my covenant and salvation, and he will give me grace before I depart out of this life, to say with holy David, full of love and gratitude. *Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul; and forget not all His benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowns thee with loving kindness and tender mercies.*

Now, my dear friends, it is time to draw towards the conclusion; but before I do this, it will be proper to satisfy your expectation about the happy end of our dearly beloved brother, departed in the Lord. Concerning his former life, I have no occasion to mention any thing, this being sufficiently known to most members of this congregation; I shall mention only what I have seen and heard in the latter days of his life. His fear of death, in the beginning, was very great, as he thought
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his repentance was not genuine. For which reason he could not, as I observed, apply to himself the promises which God, in his word, has given *to the weary and heavy laden*. He was in great bitterness for peace, though he did not make the beginning of his repentance in this his last sickness; O, no, but he had felt the burden of his sins for near five years before, and often, with deep remorse, confessed transgressions of the commandments of his God. If riches and friends could minister comfort to a distressed and broken heart, as some vainly imagine, who might sooner have found comfort than he? For he wanted neither, but he knowing the emptiness of both, looked for help from none but from Him that is Zion's comfort. Next morning, when I came to see him, his first word was, I should kneel down and pray with him. During my prayer, he clasped my hands, prayed very earnestly, and told me afterwards he was much strengthened. However, the fear of death was not quite over yet, but the Lord, who does every thing in due season, shewed him most mercifully that he can give strength to the weak, courage to the fearful, and comfort to the tempted; nay, he did it himself, at the time when those were present, who so often were sad witnesses of his disconsolate state, for to be witnesses also of the foretastes of his heavenly joy, and this time of mercy was the day before he died. It was punctually and literally fulfilled in him, what the Prophet in these words, which he himself chose for his funeral text, says, in that day thou shalt say, *O Lord, I will praise thee, though thou wast angry with me; thine anger is turned away and thou comfortest me*. From this time he was quite resigned, and submitted entirely to the will of God, saying,

What, Christ, thou dost is all divine;
 Thy will's most just and holy
 To thee I yield; for I am thine:
 In Thee I rest me solely.
 Thou art my God, whose loving rod
 Turns all my sore distresses
 Into that voice, which blesses.

Soon after I asked him, by desire of some friends, if he was not desirous of receiving the sacrament once more? He answered, O yes! But what do you say to it? If you, my reply was, are heartily sorry for your past sins, and take refuge in Christ, not only in life, but even in death, you may do it very well. His answer was, I believe in Christ Jesus, for on his account my sins are now forgiven me; He is my sal-

vation, therefore I am safe, and fear not, *for whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee: my flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.* After this, the feat of the covenant was administered to him by a regular clergyman of the place where he was; and he received it with such tokens of devotion, that almost every one of those who were present could not help shedding tears of joy.

Thy blood, O gen'rous vine!
Has such a pow'r and might,
That it can well refine
The world, and cleanse it quite;
And from death and Satan's jaws,
Vindicate thy righteous cause.

Before the Sacrament, he blessed God for the comforts received; and after it he added, with great assurance and confidence,

Lord! my spring of consolation,
I am thine, as thou art mine,
Here's no separation!
I am thine, since thou thy passion
Underwent, to th' intent,
Of my soul's salvation.
I am thine, since I embrace thee
With my heart, ne'er to part,
Till thy light solace me:
Lord, make haste, translate me yonder,
Where thy love shall improve,
To an endless wonder.

I call you to witness for it, O my dear friends, that are now present here, and had the same happiness with me to be near this hero in his death for eight hours and an half together, and have seen him with your own eyes in full presence of his mind, and in the fruition of his heavenly joy. You are witness, I say, to every thing that I have advanced now. Nay, was I to mention every particular of what I have heard, what time would it require? But having transgressed the proper limits of a discourse already, I hasten to the end.

OUR BLESSED FRIEND

So died, to the great sorrow of his disconsolate widow, his deeply wounded parents, and his mournful friends; and yet he left them no small comfort in the moment of his death, for surely none can die so except he that has found the full pardon of sin in the blood of Jesus. True, he died young; but, as the book of Wisdom says, Chap. iv. 11, 13, 14, he has been snatched away, that the malice of the world should not pervert his understanding. He soon grew up to perfection, and has lived many years. God being well pleased with his soul, he hastened with him out of this wicked life.—

I have but one thing more to add, my dear friends; which is, that I charge every one to put this question to himself: What song of praise have I hitherto sung to God, my benefactor, for all his infinite mercies which he has bestowed upon me? Nobody, I suppose, is here present; who has not reason to confess, that he has very often transgressed that precept of the Lord. Be thankful in every thing. And, alas, how many may there be of those that never truly repented; yet God grant, that none may go on in this wickedness; for what sort of wickedness can be greater than ingratitude. But if this should unhappily be the case with some of you, how would ye heap sins with sins; and what a tremendous Eternity would open itself in your conscience, even before you go out of this world.

Consider, therefore, I beg on you, your own good; think, as long as it is said to-day, of that which is to come: God remembered you in mercy before the foundation of the world, and has proved it by the sending of His Son, that his promises are ya, and amen; and you do not care much for this love. Be sensible of this most heinous sin; confess it; repent for it; and pray God to pardon it, for the merits of Jesus's sake. God, who is full of mercy, will have mercy on all those that pray to Him in the name of His Son. But if you have attained to it, and perhaps with many tears, be sure to perform also what on this occasion you have vowed to God. God demands this of you, and the uncertainty of this life requires it. Lay this properly to heart; then your greatest care will be to pray with David, from Psal. xc. ver. 12. *Teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.*

TO Thee, O Eternal God, infinitely good and merciful God, all honour, praise, glory, and adoration is due, for the gifts of nature as well as of grace. It is thine own will, O Lord God, that we shall make prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving. Therefore we most heartily thank thee, for all thy mercies and loving kindneses which thou hast bestowed upon us, and for all the benefactions which we have received, and still receive, in this country; wherein, notwithstanding we are strangers, we not only eat our bread, and drink our water, under our vine and fig-tree, in peace and uninterrupted tranquillity; but even can serve and worship thy name in our language, and after the manner of our fathers.

We pray thee, most merciful God, look down graciously on all the inhabitants of this town and the whole nation, and bless them temporally and eternally.

Especially we recommend to thy kind protection, his Majesty our most gracious king George the Third, our most gracious queen Charlotte, his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, and the Princess Dowager of Wales, and all the Royal Family.—

Let thine eyes, O God, be always fixed on the sacred person of our King, and give him that wisdom which comes from Thy throne, that his government may be abundantly blessed to the glory of Thy name, and to the good of these realms, and all his loyal subjects, to the latest posterity. Grant also mercifully, that the trifolium of our tender royal Princes may be led and conducted, that they be Princes after Thine own heart, Princes who have princely thoughts, and remember thee their Creator, in the days of their youth; while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh; when they shall say, we have no pleasure in them.—

Moreover we heartily praise thee, O Lord, for all the mercies which thou hast shewn so abundantly in our blessed brother departed in thee; especially, for that work of grace which thou didst not only begin in his soul, but happily finished through thy power. O grant, my God, that his end, which thou hast made so glorious, may make such an impression in our hearts, that we may number our days, and wisely set our hearts to chose the better part.

We also humbly beg thee, O Lord Jesus! comfort the heart of his disconsolate widow, and his deeply wounded Parents, by thy Comforter the Holy Ghost. Shew them, that thou also bindest up those wounds which thou hast made. As by thy will they have lost their
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only joy, we beseech Thee give them grace to trust so much the more in Thee. Let them every day feel more, that Thou art the God of their salvation, and that their sorrowful hearts may be comforted again. Fill them, with Thy grace, that they may praise Thee, and be full of joy all the days of their life.—

Wipe also the tears from the eyes of all his relations, who by his death are turned into mourning. And grant, that under their mourning cloth, which they now wear, they may be cloathed with Christ's robe of salvation; that every one, when he is to leave this world, according to thine own good will and pleasure, may have full assurances of faith to say, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.

Glorify, O God, thy Son Jesus Christ in us, and graciously grant, that in prosperity and adversity we may not only confess him with our mouths, but also heartily believe in him. Bless us, O Lord our God, and let all the world fear thee, Lord. Amen.

A SHORT

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A
SHORT ACCOUNT
OF
THE LAST HOURS
OF
HENRY BECKMAN, ESQ.

SHORT ACCOUNT

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THE L. T. HOURS



HENRY BECKMAN, ESQ.

SHORT ACCOUNT, &c.

THE design of this account is only to relate facts, and to satisfy the desire of some friends who knew the deceased, and who found his greatest pleasure to be in God and in glorifying his name. Some persons will perhaps say that I should suppress this account, because, at the end of the sermon, I have already said something on this head. But those who judge in this manner, may consider it is impossible to introduce in a sermon certain circumstances which may be nevertheless of some utility and edification to the christian reader.

If any body should object, that we have already many edifying relations of the behaviour of dying men well written, I agree to it; and I conceive my own inability and weakness in this respect. But that satisfied not the desire of my friends, who are of opinion that the words of a dying man, truly reported to the auditor or reader, make much greater impression than words selected with study, and arranged with an accurate precision.

This being undeniable, concealing all the merits of art where it is necessary, I pray every body to consider the words of Solomon: that God is in heaven, and he upon the earth, to be not rash with his mouth and judgment.—

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But before I come to the matter in hand, I will, in few words, mention how the Divine Providence, without which nothing happens, conducted me to Southampton, to assist the deceased in his last hours. I made, on the seventh of November, a visit at Canonbury-house, Islington, (as I was wont to do sometimes) where the parents of the deceased lived. Mrs. S. his mother, on my going away, said to me, I should do her a great pleasure, if, as soon as I could, I would go to the before-mentioned place to see her son, who was a little indisposed, and would be very glad of it; and stay there some days, and return with him to London, if his health should permit it. After a short deliberation, I promised to comply with her request. The ninth, in the morning, I went from hence, and I arrived there about nine in the evening.

I heard from his servants, after my arrival, that the whole day he had longed to see me, and that he had chosen the text, Mark vii. 37. *The Lord hath done all things well*; for me to explain to him the next day, the Sunday: He was indifferently well the whole day; but, to my surprize, was ill upon hearing of my arrival: I waited, therefore, a little in an outer room, until he was come to himself again; after that I went in to him. His joy to see me is not to be described, and it is easier to feel it, than to clothe it in words. I stood this evening, to midnight, in his chamber, and left him so well that I flattered myself I should accompany him in a few days to London.

Such are the manners of the world. We purpose often to do something agreeable to us; but God seeth fit to disappoint our designs. Blessed is the man who makes hearty prayers to God, before he resolves to do any thing; because he reapeth no present satisfaction, if God orders it otherwise.

At ten in the morning I was with him again, and found him very well. I prayed with him, as he desired; and we spoke about the state of his health. Amongst other things, he said to me, that he took physic with an ill will. You hinder, I replied sharply, the hastening of your recovery. The means are created by God for our use. In the presence of his wife, for whom he shewed to his death the tenderest love and veneration, he promised me to follow in all things my counsel.

Finding him a little more vigorous, I turned the discourse upon the bounty of God, which he constantly displayed to all his creatures, and which never failed, but is increased every day; and upon his love, which he hath shewn to back-sliding and rebellious mankind. If God had shewn kindness to the holy angels, filled always with his praise, or to the first man, bearing his image, in the state of innocence, we should have

have no reason to be surpris'd at it. But it cannot be enough admired, that he so heartily loved us, his backsliding children, as to help all men in His Son Jesus Christ, *who gave himself a ransom for all*, 1 Tim. ii. 5. if we will hear his voice.

It is, answered he, a great consolation to a sinner, that the redemption of Jesus belongeth to all men; it is an excellent consolation for me, I am a great sinner. Saying those words, he shewed a great and visible repentance for the sins which he had committed, and he confessed himself to be really unworthy of the love and mercy which the long suffering of God had afforded him.——

Because you said heretofore, replied I, that the universality of the merits of Christ's warfare was a great comfort for a sinner; tell me, I pray you, if you have sometimes found comfort in Jesus, when your sins disquieted you? Yes, sure, answered he; but this comfort continued not long, and soon after a great anxiety seized upon me.

Be of good cheer, said I to him after that; it is a very great ease to a sinner burdened and afflicted with his sins, if he has felt once in his soul the foretaste of the love of God: because, however, the anguish of his sins return, and he is obliged to grieve and lament under this burden; let him never withdraw from God, but wait with patience for his assistance; being sure that God will accomplish all that he promiseth, and that he is the best comforter in time of need.

The reason of this anxiety which overtaketh us, after having received comfort in our souls, are our sins, which we commit partly without thought, partly with design: however, God who hateth the sin and the sinner, has a right to visit us in His anger for our sins; yet, we see, He sheweth grace, yea, undeserved grace, instead of doing justice upon us. The anxiety caused by our sins, is not a punishment, but a new sign of His love; by these means He sheweth us, that we are unable to do any thing without him: He obliges us by the acknowledgement of our inability to join the more stedfastly with Him, and he teacheth us to partake providently and faithfully of his means of grace.

The divine consolation only visits those who have sought it in time of need, because human consolation you know is vain.

He was very well pleased with all this, but I was obliged to abridge the discourse, observing that his weakness would not allow dwelling upon the subject. A short time afterwards, coming to himself, he called for me, and related to me the most remarkable things of the town of

Southampton. Hereupon I was resolved to pay his physician the first visit, who took a peculiar care of him. That was at ten o'clock in the morning.

Seeing him in so good a situation, and believing that all the danger was already past, I profited by the opportunity, and leaving him in his room, I advised his parents, being desired to do it by his wife; that there were great hopes they would soon see their son again. This letter arrived not till after his death.

However, the hope of his being better was very flattering, it was but short, and very deceitful. About noon he was greatly discouraged. Death appeared to him very fearful, yet his name only terrified him. Often he offered me his hand to feel his pulse, and to tell him if he was worse: when, added he, think you, that we shall return to London?

If God will and blesteth the use of the medicines as hitherto, I hope it will be next Wednesday. I know, said he, that I shall go this journey in my coffin; which alas! was exactly fulfilled. After that I desired him, for his own advantage, to relinquish those thoughts which increased his weakness: but if you will reflect on death, consider him not on this fearful side. Death, indeed, is dreadful to the wicked, because it is the end of earthly happiness and temporal pleasure, and the beginning of eternal sorrow: but death must be delightful to a christian, who heartily repenteth him of his sins, who asks from God grace only for Christ's sake, and puts his confidence in Christ's justice living and dying, because through him he goes sooner to his repose. All that is very good, said he, I never doubted of any point of our christian faith, but I am at present much grieved.

His anxiety was before very great, but now it seemed to have obtained the highest pitch. Pray to God, said he, I don't know where I shall abide for anxiety. Every one could observe it, because he sweated for fear, and his words were accompanied with deep sighs and streams of tears. Every body who has seen his friend suffer, will conceive how sensibly the situation of my friend touched me, and how grievous it must be to his wife. Kneeling down forthwith, I prayed heartily to God, that He would be pleased graciously to have pity on him and to comfort him by His spirit, so that he might overcome that hard temptation and trial.

A slumber, for about half an hour, fell upon him, and when he awoke, he desired very earnestly, about one o'clock in the afternoon, once more to see his parents.

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I represented to him the great distance of Southampton from London, and shewing him that it was not so easy, I desired him to submit himself to the will of God: I promised, to satisfy his longing, to give notice to his parents, hoping that he, perhaps, might have the joy of seeing them.

About two o'clock he was attacked by a violent paroxysm, as the physicians called it, which was followed by two other fits no less violent, every one of which seemed as it would put an end to his life, during some minutes. The sight of the sick was very sorrowful in itself, and it was doubled by the presence of his almost inconsolable spouse. Observing now so great danger, and the physician assuring me I should lose no time, in conformity with the desire of Mrs. Beckman, I advised her father and mother-in-law of the wishes of their son, and added, that according to human appearance there was very little hope of his life, and that they must immediately set out on their journey, if they would see him alive. Although his death seemed to be very near to all then present, and he had four violent succeeding fits till eight o'clock in the evening, nevertheless we saw him half an hour after, by the grace of God, to our astonishment, in his senses. He began several times to speak, but his words were not yet intelligible: perceiving it himself, and having some things of importance, as I thought, to say, he asked for pen and paper, and made efforts to write his thoughts, but alas! his weak and trembling hand could not do it. We desired him therefore to wait a little till he had recovered more strength, and then he might impart what he had in his mind: he agreed to it. About ten o'clock his spouse and I, sitting down on his bed, asked concerning his present situation. He answered very intelligibly, Pretty well. Do you know, I added, what four violent fits you have sustained? Yes, said he, I know it, but I wish God henceforth would preserve me from them, and preserve me in my right senses.

Besides that, he used many affectionate and tender expressions towards me, and taking my hand, he assured me of his constant love.

His fear of death was also much diminished, as we may suppose from his words to his spouse: if I die, my dear, I wish you may soon follow me out of this wicked world. Hearing these words, I went aside and thanked God for the grace which He had shewed anew.

We could see from hence plainly, that by the grace of God, a change had been made in him, because every one present heard him speak of death with tranquillity, which before he could not bear to hear of.

of. Returning into his room, I asked him if he would render thanks to God for His assistance given him? He answered hereupon, that he should be pleased if I would do it. Kneeling down, I returned thanks to the Lord for the relief afforded him, and that in few words, because of his great weakness, and I recommended him and all of us to the gracious protection of the Divine Being.

Although he seemed pretty well after this, yet I could not leave him, because in a short time he had changed so very often. Contrary to our expectation he rested well all night. In the morning, seeing him awake, I went and informed myself how he had rested. Very well, was his answer; we will give God thanks who has preserved us, and brought us to the beginning of this day. I was very glad of what he uttered, and rendered God thanks. Finding him so well again, I thought it was the season to try him and to hear if he would submit himself in all things to the will of God, as it is fitting for a child of God to do. I inquired of him, could you die with a quiet mind, if God should this day call you away from this world? Here he answered, I know that I am to die, but I am not so far, that I ——— the deceased breaking off his discourse, I desired him amicably to tell me the reason which hindered him at present from dying with joy: is it riches or friends whom you are sorry to leave? No, said he, to leave them gives me no trouble, because there is no comfort in them: I could never find herein comfort for me. I remembered a like expression used by him to me some months before when he was in health. What a miserable and imperfect creature is a man, who hath riches, friends, honour, and all that his eyes do wish; but has a sick body: he is miserable notwithstanding all his temporal happiness; but more miserable are those, said I, who like the bishop of Laodicea, Revelation iii. 17. in their imagination are rich and happy, and who know not that they are wretched and miserable, poor, blind and naked. Yes, yes, replied he, those who know not their spiritual misery, are much more miserable. ———

We see from this, that the deceased was convinced of the vanity of this life, and by experience ascertained of it: temporal means can give but a temporal comfort. May all who read these words make here a pause, and consider, that all the goods of this earth, how bright soever they may appear to us, are but transitory: then surely they would never so intemperately search for them; never set their hearts upon them. Riches and power are not useful, but to him who fears the Lord, and walks in his ways, because he fixes not his heart upon them,

them, and he administers them faithfully as God's steward. His chief joy is to be an instrument in the hand of God to do service to his neighbour with his abundance, and for that he giveth thanks to God.

The 11th of November, in the morning at 11 o'clock, I drew near again to his bed, because he observed that a fresh fit of weakness would overtake him. I took therefore this opportunity to exhort him to steadfastness in the faith of our Lord Jesus, to fight out the fight, which he had already fought five years ago, by the grace of God: I shewed that he never could have endured this hard wrestling by his own power, but must have been supported by that divine grace. Soon after he did sigh, O Jesus, Son of David, have mercy upon me! His trust and hope was only put in the Lord Jesus, and that notwithstanding he could not apply to himself, at present, God's promises, which put him in fear of death. He complained as David; *mine iniquities are gone over mine head, as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me*, Psalm xxxviii. 5. Such is often the case of the children of God. The Lord Jesus lets them cry long before He heareth them, and waits long before He assists them: but He will not, He cannot abandon them for ever: the best hour is known to him the omniscient Jesus: if this hour cometh, his glory appeareth as the glory of the only begotten Son of the Father, full of grace and truth.

After that the deceased longed very much to see his mother, and suddenly he was seized with a fit, followed by six others. They were all so violent, that we expected his death every moment. The physician, a man of exceeding great skill in his profession, assured us, that he could not hold long, and if he should sustain the shock, he would hardly recover his senses: but, by the grace of God, we found it quite the contrary; I might venture to affirm, that he never in his whole life was so well in his senses, and never devoted himself so long at one time to the glorifying God's name: his mouth was full of the praise and glory of God eight hours and an half without intermission, as we shall hear presently.——About noon the last paroxysm left him, and then he fell into a soft slumber of near two hours, after which he was yet but very weak and feeble, but of a sound mind again. As great as our fright was a short time before, so great was our hope and joy, which was much increased by the arrival of his father to our consolation, between two and three o'clock. At his appearance, joy combated in us with grief. Before he came to his son, I acquainted him with the condition of his body, as well as of his soul: but lest the joy of seeing a parent, whom he had so long desired to see, might occasion

casion too great a surprize, if he came upon him suddenly; I went to acquaint him previously of his father's arrival; he immediately sat up in his bed, and welcomed his father with a countenance the most expressive of joy. In what affliction of mind his poor parent must be, you can best figure to yourself; reader, if you will but consider, that thirteen months since he had lost one very hopeful son, and now beheld this at present, his only son, at the point of death: but I should rather say he beheld him at the gates of heaven, as you shall now hear.

After a short conversation the deceased, observing his friends round his bed, said to his father, You see, dear father, I have none but friends about me, and they all together cannot help me. From these words the father took occasion to say to him, My son, the will and wishes of your friends are truly laudable; and, though they cannot assist you, God still liveth, from whom alone cometh the very help. He knoweth the very time of relief. He knoweth when it is good and necessary. We must trust in Him, our God; to his will we must submit, whether it be to live or to die. You are at present in great danger, and it is your duty to kiss the rod of the Lord. We have not here any continuing place, but we seek one to come. Our God alone meaneth us well. You can see it, inasmuch as he hath given us his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. We must believe in our Lord Jesus, because God hath set him forth to be a propitiation, Rom. iii. 25. In his name we must pray, if we will be heard. O God, if every thing forsake me, do thou the best to me. I hope, my son, you will remember that in your sickness, and join only with Jesus the God of our salvation.—His afflicted father having spoke to him some time in this comfortable manner, it was agreed to leave him to himself, that he might not be over fatigued: he turned himself about in his bed, and did beseech God most heartily, that He would be pleased to grant him his grace and assistance according to his promises. He was thereafter employed half an hour in meditations, and frequently with sighs was heard to say, Look upon me graciously for thy son Jesus's sake. About half an hour after three, he began to be of good cheer and joyful, having been before devoted to sorrow: all the grief which had wrung his heart was past: there was nothing in this world that could grieve him, or with which he could be pleased: he did possess the treasure in which are hid all treasures: O! excellent treasure, which he had found: in which his mournful and afflicted soul could only meet with comfort: this treasure comprehended the grace of God and Christ, with his propitiatory sacrifice,

the reconciliation with, and the peace of God; the justice of God, the remission of sins, salvation and everlasting life. Before he possessed by the way of appropriation this treasure, he longed to see those to whom on earth he had the greatest obligation; but at present he forgot all that can delight the eyes and mind of men, and his only study was to consider the author and finisher of his faith, to admire the goodness of God, to publish forth the excellent work which He had performed on him, and to praise his name for it. Having remarked sometime the joyfulness of the deceased, I afterwards enquired of him the reason of it: he answered, I have reason enough, because I have peace with God, the assurance of the forgiveness of my sins. He applied to himself the words of St. Paul, Romans v. 1. therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. I wonder no longer at the occasion of your joy, was my answer. It is a very important point to have peace with God: we can rejoice lawfully for the jewel of temporal peace, but we have more reason to rejoice for the godly peace, which is above all reason. How happy is the christian who knoweth that he is reconciled with God by the death of Christ: because he has no reason to fear either the wrath of the Almighty, or the power of darkness, nor death, nor hell itself: he is in good cheer in all emergencies, because Jesus, said he, had by his death appeased the anger of God; spoiled the principalities and powers; taken away the power of death and the victory of the grave.

Sometime after that I told him, that I was very glad to see him so cheerful, and that all present could not sufficiently declare their joy in words. Having then, says I, obtained such a precious jewel as the peace of God, from whence are you sure of it? He joyfully answered, I have the witness in my spirit, that I am a child of God: the world knoweth nothing of such a comfortable witness, and it appears to them ridiculous.

The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them. The before-mentioned words of the deceased, are properly quoted from Romans viii. 16. where St. Paul sheweth to the faithful in what a happy condition they were, because they did not walk after the flesh, but after the spirit, and there was no condemnation to them which are in Christ; they had no more reason to fear: you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father: the spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.

It often falls out, as experience sheweth us, that a true believer in great necessities cannot call for God, but then calleth the Holy Ghost itself, as St. Paul writeth, Galatians iv. 6. because you are his sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son, into your hearts, crying Abba, father. Because he alledged so many comfortable passages of the certitude of his share in Jesus, I recited to him the following verses of a consolatory song, and he repeated them audibly after me.

I'm rejoic'd and full of peace,
 Since Christ Jesus now I know,
 I can rest—all tumults cease,
 In his bosom, where I go.
 Cherish'd in that blessed place,
 Neither death nor sin I fear,
 Christ, his wounds, my sins efface,
 And his pow'r protects me here.

He did no more repent that the Lord's hand had been so heavy upon him, for he saw himself richly comforted for it: the comfort that the comforter the Holy Ghost afforded to him, was so efficacious, that he almost became alive again, and could say with Hezekiah, O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit. Behold, for peace I had great bitterness: but thou hast in love to my soul, delivered it from the pit of corruption. Isaiah xxxviii. 16, 17.

How much soever his relations were concerned at his sufferings, seeing his joy in God, they suspended their sorrows. The danger which he was in as to his body, seemed to them to be no longer a danger. They wished much, that his life, would it please God, might be lengthened still, but having no hopes of that, they were glad that they should not lose him for ever, but merely for a short time. God's word assured them, that the dead, who died in the Lord, were blessed from thenceforth; yea, saith the spirit, they rest from their labour, and their works follow them. Revelation xiv. 13.

As our friend persisted in his resolution to trust alone in Jesus, and got also a little more strength of body, I was desired at five o'clock, to ask him if he had an inclination to take once more the holy sacrament: he seemed at first to muse over my question to himself; but soon replied, I should tell my opinion about it. Hereupon I told him shortly the duty of a faithful communicant, asking him if he would

would persevere in Jesus, the sole cause of his salvation, and behave like a faithful warrior of His, even to his life's end. Having answered it with a joyful yes, the minister of that place was sent for: from that time to seven o'clock, when the minister was present, he himself was wondering at the kindness of God, praising and exalting him, and he prepared himself to receive the sacrament as a christian ought. Convinced of his sinful state, he prayed to the God of his salvation for the wedding garments, that he might appear as a worthy guest at the bridal feast. He ascribed every thing to the grace of God, the love and merits of his Saviour; to himself nothing but his sins; but these were forgiven him for that reason. The minister being come, and having undertaken the service, he behaved so devoutly, that all present were exceedingly moved at it. Receiving the sign of the covenant out of the minister's hand, he lifted up his trembling hands and his eyes to heaven and sighed. The words which he made use of, were like those of that godly doctor of our church, Mr. Meisner, who receiving the sacrament before he died, said, O! Lord Jesus, thou hast given me Thy body to eat, and to drink Thy blood; in these thou hast given me every thing. I wrap myself wholly up in Thee; hold me close to Thee and I will not leave Thee. O Lord Jesus, Thou hast given to eat and to drink this thy body, therefore it cannot remain in the earth, but must rise once after this time and come forth. After that he said the before-mentioned verse,

Thy blood, &c.

When this holy service was ended, I went to my room, and wrote down what I had heard. Scarce was I a quarter of an hour by myself, when there entered a person who had shed many tears for his sake, and desired of me to go to his room, jointly with him to observe his heavenly joy. I went presently, and sat down near his bedside, the better to hear his words, which were a little faintly spoken, though his sincerity was very apparent; he giving thanks to God, that he had made him fit to be a partaker of the Saints in light, delivered him from the power of darkness, and translated him into the kingdom of His Son. He then mentioned St. Paul's words, Eph. i. 3, 4, 5. Blessed be the Lord and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places, in Christ; according as he has chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world. That we should be holy, and without blame, before him, in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ, to himself, according to the good

pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he has made us accepted in the beloved. I cannot deny, but that hearing the departed in the Lord speak thus, I was quite transported with joy, and the words of Revelation xxi. 3. * darted into my mind: Behold the tabernacle of God is with men.—Again at 10 o'clock I spoke a little to him, and asked him, if he chose any refreshment.

He chose a little cordial for several days before, but neither eat or drank any thing else, nor could be prevailed upon so to do, he being entirely satisfied with the food that worked to him eternal life. On which I put to him the question over again, If he was sure of his eternal happiness? to which he replied, with Job, chap. xix. 25, 26, 27. I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. After the worms, bred underneath the skin, have destroyed this earthly body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not for another. O happy man! I replied, You dread not the agonies of death; but how must the wicked tremble at this hymn:

Eternity, tremendous word,
Home-striking point, heart-piercing sword,
Beginning without ending;
Eternity without a shore,
Wherever fiery billows roar,
What is thy fight portending?
One glimpse of thine unfathom'd deep,
Would rouse a wretch from sinful sleep.

But you speak now in hope of glory,
Eternity, delightful sound,
Where real joys are to be found,
And scenes of endless bliss before ye.

He continued still in the same mind at twelve o'clock at night, as appeared from his words which he spoke to me, as I related in the beginning of the sermon. After twelve he fell into a sleep that

* I did alledge that text at the end of the sermon, but by the printer's mistake it was overlooked. Likewise the hymn he had chosen and appointed to be sung after the sermon. What thou my God do'st, all's well done, &c.

lasted about an hour, and then he had thirteen successive fits; and, about nine o'clock in the morning, he yielded up the ghost, on Tuesday the ninth of November, 1765, in the twenty-seventh year of his age. He died a true warrior of Jesus, full of confidence and faith in his Redeemer, to obtain from his hands the crown of eternal life, which he had enjoyed already here by faith.

No less edifying was the end of the younger brother of the departed in the Lord, Mr. William Beckman, who, by his faith in the Lord Jesus, and by his patience in his sickness, had given him almost the example to die well and to inherit the promise. He lived three years at the University of Oxford, and applied very carefully to the study of divinity: the superiors of Brazen-nose college always made honourable mention of him: on this account he was a great joy to his parents, and gave them the sweet hope to be a comfort to them, in their hastily approaching years. But as God knows the best what is useful and salutary to us, He laid him a great while a-bed with a sick and languishing body. Three days before his end he lay speechless; as soon as he could speak again, which was on the Saturday morning before he died, he began to shew that as he did love God in health, he loved him still at the brink of the grave. Burning with love and reverence towards his God, and prompted by a hearty desire to see others as happy as himself, he called three times, quite loud, O, sinners arise and repent, for the Son of God has appeared! I have overcome death, hell, and the devil! O, come to the Saviour of the world!

An hour before he died, his physician came and asked him how he did? he replied, never better: and asking him again, if he did not feel any pain in his limbs? he answered, no where: surely he did not feel any more pain, his wound being healed by applying Christ's merit: as a full conviction of which, to those who were present, he began to talk amply of the sufferings of Jesus, and proved they belonged to every sinner, how great soever, if he is not stiff-necked, and wilfully persists in his sins. To prove what he had said, he cited the words of the Great Prophet, who says, I am come to seek and save what is lost. Sundry persons being at the same time in the room, he turned to them, and asked, Do you believe this? One amongst them, seeing he insisted upon an answer, said, Yes: This is, replied he, well for you. After this, the departed in the Lord, exhorting all that were about him to hearken to his words, with the same urgent expressions I have mentioned before.—

Satan, who with his cunning arrow attacks all men, endeavoured still to make him waver in his conscience; but he called confidently, O Satan, thou prince and ruler of air, do thy worst; thou art judged: for Jesus, said he three different times, is God's Son; he has done what the Mediator promised, by God, he should do. Then he said, to the person sitting next to him, Is not this the pattern of God's Son? O what an excellent pattern! Being at the same time very weak, he was desired to speak a little lower, that he might not hurt himself: he accordingly did so, but afterwards spoke very loud, desiring those that were present to draw near him, and gave them his last blessing: he was then again desired to spare himself. How, said he, should not I sing to the praise of my God: therefore he sung a hymn, which, being a dying man, was very moving to the spectators, it being to the praise and glory of his Saviour; and then fell into a swoon, during which there was prayer three times; and, when the third minister ended his prayer, he three times answered, Amen; and died on Saturday the twentieth of October, 1764, at Clapham, in the house of Mr. William Hervey, to the great grief of his parents and friends: but these meet with sufficient relief, if they consider the words of Isaiah, chap. lvii. 1, 2. the righteous is taken away from the evil to come: he shall enter into peace: they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness. In that manner are gone to heaven both those gentlemen, who were brothers, and of whom I could have mentioned many excellent actions, if that had been my aim; but those who knew them, will remember them always. The God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you what is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen.

O LIFE

O LIFE, how short thou art! and destiny,
 How cruel dealst thou with us on this earth!
 Thou tak'st away our friends before connections
 Are ripe, and every tender tie dissolv'st.
 This thou hast done, to my own private sorrow—
 And yet, Melpomene, forbear to wail;
 For nothing happens, but by Providence:
 There is a God omnipotently great,
 Who heav'n, earth, sea, and all that in them is,
 Has form'd from nothing.—E'en the floods of grief
 Conduct us to his throne, and plagues and troubles
 Draw with him, who still bears the most himself.
 Was it not love and grace, beyond compare,
 That sent his son; yea, sent his only son,
 From every mortal sinner to avert
 The darts of death and merits of our crimes.
 All men, O God! who wish and seek to know thee,
 Must prove thy love in agony and death.—
 Yet this is not a task of ease; in days
 Of riches, honour, friends, and worldly blessing;
 When blooming youth, and lively gaiety,
 Leads us to follow fashion and our pleasures.
 But things a total diff'rent aspect wear,
 When wak'd by guilt we find our sinful selves.

This, O my friend, thou knew'st; and therefore pray'd
 To God, thro' Christ; from thence sustain'd to bear
 Affliction's burning throes with resignation.
 The word of God is Christ, to men afflicted.
 Thou thus believ'dst, and found, the blest effect:
 Thou call'dst for aid, and it was sent from heav'n.

How

How joyful wast thou, when God's pow'r of grace
 Shew'd thee thy sins remitted; shew'd thee peace
 And everlasting life, thro' Christ's great merit.
 Then thou began'st to prove triumphant weakness,
 Surpassing human strength, to praise thy Saviour.
 This was a glorious praise! a good FAREWELL:
 And now thou art a choirist in the skies,
 To laud His name who saw that all was good,
 Thro' Christ, ev'n death and sorrow.—Now thy joy
 Is Jesus, thy salvation, thy reward.
 God is alone uncontroverted Power——
 To *one* he gives longevity: and *one*
 He snatches, like a blossom, to his bosom.
 Whate'er he does is wisdom, in th' event.—
 Then let me die, my Saviour! like a man!
 Die like my friend; for this is All I ask;
 For Christ, his sake, who calls us to himself.

AMEN